

## repercussions by caffeinescripts

**Series:** afterwards [1]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, also steve & jonathan get their well deserved scene, also theres cussing if anyone cares beware of that, although everyones mentioned briefly!, anyways thats all i just love my children, bc they deserve it & steves a nice guy!, platonic steve / jonathan the writers will never give us, the next day feels for specifically jonathan and nancy, who wants his friends to be happy so enjoy

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, The Whole Gang really, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, tiny Mike/Eleven mentions

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**Summary:**

Nancy awoke to sunlight spilling through the crack in the curtains, shining lightly in her weary eyes. She was exhausted even though she just woke up, they all were and would be for the next few days. She took a few moments to bear her senses, although she knew exactly where she was the second her eyes opened. She knew exactly whose sheets she was tangled up in as she shifted slightly, knew exactly who her bed partner was.

## repercussions

### Author's Note:

the night & next day of the season 2 finale & all the aftermath that came with it, 100% canon. confirmed. i promise. they just didn't show it. sorry this is so long, btw.

dedicated to jackie and geena, obviously, but they'd be pissed if i didn't write it here.

Nancy awoke to sunlight spilling through the crack in the curtains, shining lightly in her weary eyes. She was exhausted even though she just woke up, they all were and would be for the next few days. She took a few moments to bear her senses, although she knew exactly where she was the second her eyes opened. She knew exactly whose sheets she was tangled up in as she shifted slightly, knew exactly who her bed partner was.

They were drained last night when the four of them stumbled in through door. However, they came home to other problems. The kids had set the vines on fire, Steve was beaten to a pulp, and Hopper and Eleven still hadn't returned. Nancy barely thought twice as she grabbed his hand, waiting to fall down on his soft mattress and pretend they hadn't just exercised his brother. Instead they fell onto the couch and waited. They waited and waited, Joyce even suggested Steve go to the hospital, though he insisted he'd be fine. Everyone's attention was on Eleven (and Hopper) when they walked through the door.

"I'll take the couch." Steve offered a little while later, the kids going to find as many sleeping bags as they could before they had to settle for makeshift beds out of pillows and blankets on the floor. Dustin and Joyce protested that he sleep (he could have a concussion), but he said he probably wouldn't anyway. Everyone nodded, silently agreeing. Most of them would be in the living room, except Mike who wouldn't leave Eleven or Will, so they were residing in sleeping bags on Will's floor.

No one else was really paying attention, Hopper took the chair and Joyce took her own bed. Nancy barely even thought about it as she took Jonathan's hand, interlocking their fingers. That left some questions, basically the entire room raising an eyebrow when she retreated with Jonathan to his room. No one knew they were together. Well, except maybe Steve, who stayed silent as Nancy led Jonathan to his room with her. Screw it, they'd explain later.

Right now, they were tired. The kind of tired felt in their bones, like this hadn't been the most stressful day of their lives in a year. It was a feeling that also paired quite nicely with anger. They were exhausted with this, it wasn't fair. Not to them, who had to deal with it. Not to his mom and Hopper, who had to try to fix it. Not to the thirteen year olds in the other room who had to live with a chunk of their childhood robbed from them by a monster from another dimension. And certainly not to Will, who'd spend the rest of his life with these memories of what happened to him, with this P.T.S.D.

Jonathan hadn't even realized it was all crashing on him and he was getting visibly upset until he felt pressure on his shoulders, being pushed down onto his bed.

"Just breathe." She calmed him, sinking down to his level on her knees. She was shorter than him, but she didn't let that deter her as she looked straight into his eyes. "Jonathan, breathe." She was commanding gently.

He couldn't handle it, the weight on him felt like too much. They were all upset, all of them wanted to breakdown and scream and cry how it wasn't fair this was their lives. Jonathan followed Nancy's advice, although it was more like a soft order. He let his eyes meet hers, everything he was feeling hitting him even harder. It wasn't fair to her.

"It's okay." She comforted him, even though it wasn't and they both knew that. Still, she wrapped her arms around his neck, letting him know she was there for him. Jonathan went rigid for a second before he broke, hugging her back. "It's okay." She whispered.

Eventually, they had to get ready for bed. Actual bed and not fake sleeping with their clothes on top of his covers. No one in the house would be able to sleep after what happened, even though they had to. She could hear soft voices conversing in the other room, trying to comfort each other. Nancy didn't want to sleep either, but she felt braver tonight than she had a year ago when she went to the Upside Down. The gate was closed now, she told herself. You'll both probably pass out from exhaustion soon.

"Hey Nancy," Jonathan asked as she finished pulling her sleeping shirt for the night on, courtesy of Jonathan. Her night bag was still in the car, but she was offered to wear a clean shirt instead. It was soft from the fabric softener Ms. Byers' used, and smelled like him, despite the fact he would be next to her.

"Yeah?" She replied. He was in a clean set of pajamas as well, sitting on the edge of his bed now.

"Thank you for, uh, everything." He said softly, Nancy shaking her head without thinking about it as she bit down a smile. She didn't want his gratitude, she wanted him to be okay. For them all to be.

"We should get some rest." She sighed, making her way over to the bed as well.

Jonathan actually laughed, without humor. "I don't think I'll be able to sleep ever again."

Nancy nodded. She understood. Out of anyone, she understood. "Well, can you try?" She looked at him softly. "For me?" She tacked on, getting a real chuckle out of him this time.

Despite the fact it wasn't said, they both knew Jonathan's reply. *Anything* for her. God, it was scary how connected, how committed they were to each other, despite the fact only yesterday had it become explicitly romantic.

That realization hit Nancy like a brick. God, had it really only been

one day? She felt so much older. She knew he did too.

Still, Jonathan nodded, ignoring the heavy atmosphere in the room. "Yeah, okay."

"Good." Nancy nodded, matter of factually. She climbed into his bed cautiously, as if she was afraid it would break. If he would. She didn't lay down though, she sat on the bed instead, facing him as he pulled his legs off the ground and onto the mattress.

Nancy bit her lip, and for the first time in a long time, Jonathan realized he was seeing Nancy without her self assured, business-like facade. She looked...nervous, or maybe like she was contemplating. She wanted to say something but wasn't sure if she should. Not a typical emotion for her, considering everything she did was with grace and confidence. Jonathan wondered if Nancy ever really let her walls down anymore, although he wasn't sure how she fooled people so well when he saw her so clearly.

Guilt racked over him now, as he slowly moved his hand towards her own. She wasn't alright either, but she was the one making sure he was. Nervously, with shaking hands, he brushed his fingers over hers as if he was asking if it were okay. She smiled lightly, not moving them though. Not pushing them as he grabbed her hand slowly. "What's on your mind?" He asked so softly it was basically a whisper.

Nancy let her shoulders fall. "What now?" She asked, looking him squarely in the eye, as if he knew.

He didn't, but he knew it was more than just a simple question. It was for him. What now? Were they going to revert back to where they were a year ago. What were they now. What did he want them to be now.

He decided to answer honestly, his voice breaking. "I don't know."

Nancy looked up at him again. "Me either." She, assured as always, squeezed his hand. She looked down at their linked hands like she had at the motel, as if debating on her words again. It hung in the air. What the hell were they. "I'll wait." She decided, still not looking

at him. "Again. If you want me to."

Suddenly, Jonathan was aware of everything. Of the tension. Of the room. Of the pressure on his shoulders and his heart suddenly pounding in his chest. Of his hands shaking slightly now and his face heating up. Because, *fuck*, he had no experience with girls especially a girl like Nancy Wheeler. Especially a girl he's pretty sure he's in love with despite they're barely seventeen and are too young to confidently say those words. But he was.

And here she was. The girl he worried and thought about way too much within the past year, sitting on his bed, not looking him in the eye. Asking him to ask her to wait for him. God, she didn't deserve this. She deserved someone less of a broken mess. Someone good who'd provide her with the normal life she deserved. Like Steve, he thought idly, who was just outside the door. Someone who could give himself to her one hundred percent, no little brother or monster weighing on his mind. Jonathan's thoughts swarmed. Will would need him even more, so would his mom after losing Bob. In a way, this was worse timing for them than last year.

Nancy took a deep breath, eyes finally rising to meet his. She could read him just as clearly. It was as if she could see every battle he was going through, why he should say no and let her go. For good. He made the mistake of meeting her gaze.

She wasn't used to ever really being vulnerable with someone else. Every time she expressed herself to Steve it was met with a "there's nothing we can do" followed by good natured comforting. But it was different with Jonathan, there was always something they could do. He'd always be up for it. And Nancy certainly wasn't used to raw honesty (at least, in this past year) but she knew what she was saying without words. Ask me to wait. Please. She'd really wait, she would. Seriously this time, more than a month, even though she'd still defend her judgement on that one, because now she didn't wonder about any loose ends with Steve or if Jonathan even wanted her. She'd wait as long as it took for him to be in a good place with Will, his mother. But she needed something.

It was an ultimatum. Not a necessarily cruel one, but one that said

she'd spend the night with him tonight and tomorrow they'd move forward. One that could wait a few days for the dust to settle before she put this on him, she decided. She didn't want an answer. She just waited another moment.

"Just so you know." She tacked on, leaning in slowly.

Like last Christmas, she kissed his cheek. More prominent this time though, less afraid of the implications or a boyfriend waiting in the other room. He froze again though, like then. Ready for that to be that and they'd talk about this another night. She didn't push him. Try to sway him. She moved away slowly, still too close (in his opinion) when she caught his eye. She could tell by that look he'd already made up his mind, even though she wasn't sure if she wanted him to after the night they had. But one second he was sitting there, listing all the reasons in his head not to. The next, he was leaning in, catching her lips. Again.

Nancy responded back eagerly, taking this as his answer. Pouring everything she had into this kiss, like last time, except more. She was so much more than she was yesterday. He was the same. He didn't need to ask her, even though she was pretty sure there'd be no damsel in distress waiting this time, maybe just some patience on her end. She could handle that.

She would be proud of him for putting himself, putting them, first if she could focus on anything besides his lips on hers right now, deepening the kiss.

They found themselves entwined in his sheets, doing more than they probably should have. Especially for the situation at hand. Especially since a few hours ago they were burning a disease out of his younger brother, praying for a thirteen year old to close a gate and fix this mess, holding their baby brothers and their brothers' friends. Their weird little misfit family and taking a deep breath and digesting the fact it was *over*. (For now, it wasn't really ever going to be over.)

They were depleted and Nancy knew within a few minutes they'd pass out of sheer fatigue than of feeling safe and content enough to willingly sleep. She was wrapped up in his arms though, so maybe

the content part was true.

“Nancy,” Jonathan mumbled, his eyes barely staying open.

She shushed him, pushing the hair out of his face as she faced him. “Get some sleep.” She whispered back. She couldn’t make out what he actually said, her own eyes being unable to stay open, but she was sure if it was important he’d repeat it in the morning. Instead, she curled more into his embrace as she let sleep take her unwillingly. They both let sleep wash over them, the lights still on.

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Then Nancy woke up to the sunlight. She looked over, careful not to move herself or Jonathan too much, suspecting she’d woken up first. She had. She looked at Jonathan for a moment, still secure against him. She wished he could be as peaceful and stress-free as he was in that moment for the rest of his life. Gently, she laid her head back down and tried to enjoy the moment as best she could before they’d have to get out of his warm bed and face the mess of reality outside his bedroom door. She was already reliving last night’s events.

Jonathan woke up after only a few more minutes, used to not getting much sleep, they hadn’t gotten more than a few hours. Everything came back to him as well, everything that happened yesterday night. He didn’t think so much could happen in one night, but he felt Nancy shift against him, in his arms, confirming that everything he remembered was real. Last night had happened.

He stirred a little bit, only looking over to see the time. Everyone would be up soon, and they’d have work to do. They’d have to fix the hole in his window, clean up the broken glass, take Will’s temperature and fix their backyard and shed. It’d take a few hours, but he was sure Hopper would help him and let the kids rest. The poor kids deserved some rest. Nancy deserved some rest too.

“Good morning,” She yawned, making it known she was awake.



She'd said the same thing yesterday, but it felt so much different now. It wasn't met with matching awkward, timid smiles. Knowing they'd have to get ready for breakfast with a crazy guy who tried (and succeeded) to push them into bed together. It was more grounded now, more real in a way.

"Morning." He replied, voice still thick with sleep. Both quiet, both sure the other had no idea what to say.

"Sleep well?" She tried, still not moving out of his arms. Not that he loosened his grip.

He shrugged. Surprisingly, it hadn't been bad. Maybe a little restless, but he'd take a dreamless night over the nightmares any day. "Yeah, actually."

"Me too," She was looking at him like that again. The way that made him feel nervous and self conscience but excited and bashful all at once. "For some reason, I sleep better with you." She said it simply, like it was a fact.

It was one for him too. "Me too." He mumbled. A smile broke out across her face, and he matched hers easily.

They were only pulled out of their world after another few moments when they heard voices outside the door. They was low enough to know the livingroom wasn't up yet, but a few people were. Definitely heard Hopper, and it sounded like Mike? Eleven was probably up then too. Jonathan sighed, it was probably best to get up, check on his mother and Will and the rest of the gang. He didn't want to leave his bed though, his room. Nancy. She was still curled into him, looking at him. He was so tired after all of this, but Nancy seemed able to read his mind. She rose first, sitting up fully and stretch her limbs, while Jonathan admired her willpower for a second.

Then, he did too while Nancy turned to him. "Time to face the real world?" She chuckled, and he nodded despite it wasn't really a question.

"Let's go."

“Let’s.” She agreed, being the first one to get out of bed as well. She missed it instantly, but forced her feet to move across the room, it dawning on her she had nothing to wear.

Jonathan must’ve realized at the same time. Grabbing clothes out of his drawers while Nancy stood in the corner of his room, wearing only his shirt and making no movement. “I’ll, uh, get your stuff out of the dryer.” He told her, and she smiled gratefully.

“Thanks.” She responded, collecting her things that she’d left on his dresser last night. A comb, a few bobby pins, a scrunchie. Jonathan made his way to the door as she moved towards the mirror in his room. He made his way to the hallway, closing the door behind him as he walked towards the bathroom. Grateful it was empty, as it looked like most of the house was still asleep, he quickly got ready before he walked towards in the laundry room. He grabbed her stuff from the dryer, after a bit of rifling considering everyone’s clothes either had sweat or monster blood all over them, so they offered to wash them all. The Byers’ spared clothes to who needed them (El and Max got over sized pajamas of Joyce’s, the boy’s and Steve getting stuff of Jonathan’s mainly because Will’s clothes would be too small).

Jonathan made his way back to his room, passing by the kitchen and bathroom, although he heard the shower running. He noticed Hopper was in the kitchen now, eating cereal next to Eleven, who had a glass of milk next to her.

“Morning.” Hopper said to him as he nodded, Eleven repeating quietly. Jonathan nodded back, making his way back to his room as the living room was slowly awakening. Max and Dustin had sleeping bags, Lucas had a pillow bed, and Steve the couch and several deeply worrying bruises and cuts that were even more purple than last night, somehow.

Jonathan knocked softly, letting her know it was him. It was met with an “okay,” as he pushed the door open more. Nancy was back on his bed sitting crisscrossed, her hair all pulled up when he walked in. “Thank you.” She said gratefully as she got up.

He was about to move out of her way when she placed a hand on his arm, stopping him in his tracks. Slowly, cautiously, she traced down his arm with her fingertips, leading to his hand. She squeezed it gently.

She didn't really say anything, just felt like she should do something. For the second time in one day, he genuinely smiled back, thinking how scary it was she had this power over him. Their moment only lasted a minute before he was going to open the door for her. She slipped by and into the bathroom, no doubt to snag some hot water before three middle schoolers and Steve took it all. Jonathan made his way back out, checking on Will now. He was still asleep, but his forehead was a normal temperature and his breathing steady. He was okay.

He thought to check on his mom, but she was still asleep as well. Afterwards, Jonathan went to the kitchen, going straight for the stove. The least he could do to thank them all for helping out his family was to make them breakfast. Hopper, nursing a coffee, asked what he was doing.

"Cooking." He shrugged, going towards the freezer. "You like Eggos, right?" He turned to ask Eleven. She seemed genuinely surprised he was talking to her, but she nodded shyly. Jonathan just laughed, knowing they kept some in the house because Mike spent the night a lot. He also knew why Mike liked them so much was because of her.

As he grabbed them Mike walked in, his hair still floppy and wet. Steve and Dustin were next, although they were still in their pajamas and looked dazed. Still, they all said their good mornings. Jonathan now going towards the fridge now as he was done popping the waffles in when Mike piped up.

"Where's Nancy?" He wondered, looking straight at Jonathan. They all were, for some reason.

"Uh..." He went red, "she's getting dressed." He answered. Did they all know? Probably. He opened the fridge, desperate for their eyes not to bore into him.

Jonathan yelled, nearly having a heart attack when he opened it. Instead of his normal stash of orange juice and a carton of eggs, a dead demogorgon dog laid where all his food should.

“What the hell?!” He demanded, Hopper echoing when he saw what Jonathan did. El made a disgusted face. Mike and Steve looked over at Dustin, who smiled sheepishly.

“It was a scientific discovery! We had to keep it.” He tried to explain, all of them looking at him like he was nuts.

“I told you not to put it in the fridge.” Mike groaned.

“It would’ve decomposed!” Dustin defended his choice.

“It did decompose! Now the inside of Will’s fridge has demogorgon guts all over it!” Eleven visibly gagged as Jonathan made a disgusted look, slamming the door.

“Sorry, man.” Steve tried, speaking slowly though. “We’ll take it outside before your mom sees.”

“No way, no we! You can barely keep the weight of your own head up, you’re not lifting that thing.” Hopper chimed in. He was right though.

“Fine, uh, they will.” Steve ruffled Dustin’s hair as he went to sit down.

“Where’s, uh, all the food?” Jonathan wondered. Steve and Dustin looked at each other, guilty. “You know what, never mind.”

After some convincing of Lucas, he and Dustin agreed to go out back and bury the dead dog thing, Max holding the door for them. They cleared a path, demogorgon blood or guts or something dripping on the floor as they awkwardly brought it out. Steve mumbled something about getting the mop.

Nancy’s hair was still damp when she came in the kitchen and joined the rest of the group, but she looked alert and well despite that. She

met Jonathan's eyes for only a second before she went to go sit down. Hopper ended up going to the store, getting enough food to feed the entire group that was camped out at the Byers'.

They all explained what happened to Mrs. Byers, when she came out for the morning, why Mike was currently scrubbing her fridge and Hopper was nowhere to be found. Jonathan and Nancy sat at the table now, with Eleven munching on the Eggos that came out of few minutes ago. She wasn't as mad as she was grossed out, but she still went to get her coffee anyways.

"Well, did any of you kids get some sleep?" She worried, grabbing the two teenagers attention as she poured her coffee.

Jonathan held Nancy's gaze for a second, before they both looked away. This wasn't exactly something they could smile awkwardly about with Murray, this was his mother. It was still something Mrs. Byers (and Mike) caught. However, Nancy only met Mike's eye before choosing to ignore it. "Yeah, yeah, sort of." Jonathan mumbled something along the same lines "What about you Ms. Byers?"

Jonathan shot up when Hopper returned with the food, going to unpack the bags and turn on the stove. "Breakfast." He answered the question nobody asked, but they all shrugged. Only one set of eyes lingered on him for another second before she turned to ask her brother and Eleven how they were doing.

Eventually, he had ten plates ready when his mom told him Will was awake, but not strong enough to get out of bed. He shoved the spatula in (a dumbfounded) Steve's hand without thinking about it as he went to check on his brother. Afterwards, they all scattered when they ate, not being enough room for all ten of them to eat in the dining room.

Nancy didn't say a word as she walked up to him, both of them standing at the counter. Not like there was anywhere to sit and not intrude on the kids on the sofa. She seemed fine with it though.

"How's Will doing?" She asked, as if Jonathan didn't see her standing in the doorway, not wanting to overstep her boundaries.

Jonathan just nodded, deciding not to comment on it. "He'll be okay. I think. Hopefully." Nancy nodded as she chewed. "How's Mike?"

That brought a small smile to Nancy's face. "Better, I'm sure, now that Eleven's back." She nodded her head to her younger brother, who still hadn't left the younger girl's side. They finished their breakfast with small talk before Nancy grabbed his plate and her own and started towards the sink, washing them.

Jonathan protested before she shook her head, giving him a look that dared him to stop her.

"Nancy, you really don't-"

"You cook, I'll clean." She cut him off once more, looking him in the eyes. "Seriously, I want to help. And if you want to too, go get the kid's plates."

"Are you sure? Nancy-"

"Yes!" She smiled at him. "Now, get me your mom's too."

Joyce was against it too, the second she looked up to see Nancy loading the dishwasher. Although her focus wasn't on Nancy for long. "Jonathan, how could you let her-?"

"Hey, she insisted! I tried-"

"He did try." Nancy offered.

Joyce just shook her head, Mike piping up as he handed his plate off. "Guess we know who calls the shots in the relationship." He said offhandedly. Joyce only raised an eyebrow as the kitchen went silent, both teenagers trying not to turn red.

It was too much for Nancy after a few seconds, clearing her throat to break the silence. "Is everyone done?" They all nodded hurriedly as she went to clean off her hands.

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They actually had a lot to do. The kids offered, hell, they were eager to help. Maybe it was because they were all anxious to do something, anything to get their minds off last night and other dimensions, but they all sat in a single row. Ready for their assignments. It was decided Joyce would be on “Will duty”, obviously. Mike didn’t want to be away from him too long though, so they offered to take shifts since Jonathan was worried for his younger brother too. It was then decided Lucas, Max, and Dustin got responsibility of normalizing the renovated shed. “Nancy, will you work on the backyard with Mike and El?”

They were all silent before Nancy nodded. Hopper started talking to Jonathan about how to properly tarp up the window until he got back with the supplies they’d need.

“Woah, woah, what about me?” Steve protested, barely sitting up straight in his chair.

A chorus of “no!”’s hit him before Hopper affirmed them. “No way kid, you’re sitting this one out.”

Steve sulked, grumbling something about how he was fine and wanted to help, but he was ignored as they branched out. Dustin and Lucas already bickering as Mike was turning to El and explaining what they had to do. Nancy wearily looked between Steve and Jonathan, before giving Jonathan one last look.

“Common kids,” Nancy pushed her little sibling and pretty sure her one day sibling-in-law shoulders as she led them out back.

It was tense, Jonathan figured he should properly try to secure the tarp before Hopper got back. Steve was still on the couch, looking half dead and upset about not being able to help as Jonathan worked. Amounting to the stiff silence, because Steve and Jonathan really had nothing in common except being in love with Nancy. The last full conversation they had was last year, and since then the most interaction they shared was Jonathan looking over him at Nancy. He was sure Steve felt a similar type of longing now.

It was quiet for the first five minutes. Jonathan pretending to now fix the tarp more even though it was as secure as it was going to get. Steve was fiddling with something on the couch, before he spoke up.

“You know, it’s okay man.” Steve broke the silence, Jonathan turning to give him a confused look. “About Nancy, I mean-I mean, I already told her that, and it’s not like you guys need my approval or anything...” He shook his head, trying to figure out his words. “What I’m saying is, I figured I’d tell you too. It’s okay, I’m not resentful for anything.”

Jonathan honestly had no idea what to say. Should he express gratitude that his...whatever Nancy was to him, that her ex wasn’t still in love with her? Not that he even said that, he just said he wasn’t resentful.

“Uh, Thanks,” He tries after several moments, although it sounds more like a question.

Steve just nodded. “I honestly should’ve seen it coming.” he went on, throwing whatever he was fiddling with and catching it. “Like, you always understood her better. And, I...” He shook his head, placing a hand on his own forehead before he winced at that action. “Anyways, I always wanted her to move on, I guess? But that’s-that’s not Nancy, no, she’s determined. You know that, don’t you?” He laughed a little, as if this wasn’t the most uncomfortable Jonathan’s ever felt in his life.

He swallowed thickly before he nodded. “Yeah, uh, she is.”

“Want to hear something funny?” It was rhetorical, he kept talking anyway. Kept fiddling. “She never told me about your little matching cuts.” He gestured to Jonathan’s hand. “I should’ve remembered you had a bandage on your hand that night too but honestly, man, you weren’t really my priority. Anyway, she told me she did it for the blood to draw the thing out or whatever. But then like, a week later you showed up back at school, a bandage around your hand where hers was. I should’ve known then. Not like we were even together at that time, she hadn’t taken me back yet then, but...still. It was like



her secret with you, I guess.”

If Jonathan thought he was speechless before, he really had no idea how to formulate a reply to *that* . They were barely acquaintances because of Nancy, he was pretty sure that was the only reason Steve was even nice to him for the past eleven months.

Steve only looked over to him now, smiling. “Like I said, it’s okay. I just...as long as she’s happy” Steve said seriously, getting up now. “I’m grabbing something to eat.”

“You sure about that?” Jonathan asked, Steve already wincing.

Steve just chuckled. “Yeah, never better. You want anything?” He hobbled his way to the kitchen.

Jonathan shook his head, weighing the option of saying something to him. Before he thought better of it, he was standing. “Hey, Steve.”

“Yeah?” He turned around.

“I...I’m, um, sorry.” Jonathan decided. He wasn’t really sure what he was exactly sorry for. For everything? For being in love with his girlfriend long before this whole thing? For knowing Nancy hurt him, and he contributed? From what he knew, Nancy and Steve were broken up when he and Nancy had...slept together, yeah, that, but it had only been a few days. He was sorry that they hurt Steve, who was being a great sport about the whole thing.

Steve only nodded, he could tell Jonathan was being genuine. “Like I said, it’s okay. Hell, I forgive you both.” he was only serious a moment. “You should really get something to eat. Hop’s not gonna let you take a break.”

Jonathan never thought he’d be following Steve Harrington to get a snack in his kitchen after getting his blessing to be with Nancy Wheeler, but here he was. Exactly what he was doing. It was easily the strangest thing that happened in the past two days.

They worked through the afternoon, taking breaks every few hours. It was around noon when they took their first one, the kids halfway done while it was taking Nancy and the other two longer because Mike kept pausing to help El or complain about how he wanted to see Will. It was 12:30 when Ms. Byers called them all in, sandwiches on a platter in the kitchen. They were all gone within a few minutes, the kids talking and complaining about the work or the cold. Besides Mike with Will, who was awake again. Hopper, begrudgingly, allowed the boys to break and eat and Joyce convinced him to eat as well.

“Thanks,” Steve said somewhat sarcastically, clamping his hand on Jonathan’s shoulder. “It’s not like I’ve been watching Jonathan here work for a few straight hours or anything.”

“Hey, watch the tone kid.” Hopper scolded.

Steve just shook his head. “Dustin, hey, you better not eat my sandwich!” He called after the younger kid, Nancy giving the whole situation, and Jonathan, a confused look. She really didn’t think Steve would be so...cool with the whole thing. Jonathan only shrugged, about to walk over to her when Mike came in the room.

“Hey, Jonathan! Will’s asking for you.” Jonathan’s eyes met Nancy before she smiled at him. She understood. *Of course* she understood. She ate her sandwich and asked the kids to tell her about their little adventure last night. It resulted in them talking over each other explaining how they set the hive mind on fire, and how Dart had let them by because of Dustin. They then had to explain what Dart was.

It was like that for a few hours. They worked. The kids gutted the shed, while she and her sibling(s) had separated the piles, the two groups coming together to restock the whole shed and clear out the backyard. Apparently the window was close to being done too, and by sunset they were all exhausted but a better kind of tired than they were last night.

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When they were as done as they could be, Joyce decided it was a good idea for them to all head home to their worried parents. Nancy really hadn't even thought about her parents, and she was pretty sure she they didn't think too about her. Still, she told them she'd be home yesterday afternoon. Lucas and Dustin agreed their moms would be flipping and Max was more worried Billy would come looking for her again.

Steve offered to give the kids who needed them rides, promising he felt better due to the painkillers he'd been nursing all day. He swore three times he could drive. Nancy shifted her weight, wondering if Mike would have to sit on her lap or something. Mike must've worried the same because he made no movement to follow the group out to Steve's car.

"I'll drive you and Mike home," Jonathan offered, coming up to her.

"You don't have to," She shook her head. "Will's getting up-"

"And my mom won't let him spend a second alone. It'll only be a few minutes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, he is." Mike cut in, not wanting to share the cramped car. Nancy only rolled her eyes at her brother, looking over to Jonathan. He nodded.

She thanked him gratefully before they all went to say goodbye to Will, each of them giving him a hug. Steve left first, the kids still bickering as they left, saving goodbye to her out the door.

Steve was saying goodbye to Ms. Byers' and Hopper before he patted Jonathan's shoulder again. "See you man." He walked past the door, "See you Nance." She smiled at him, making a mental note to ask Jonathan later when they resolved everything out.

Ms. Byers' said goodbye to her next, squeezing her in a hug. Nancy

knew she was more thankful than words, but that didn't stop her from saying it several times in between telling her mother hello. Jonathan came to her rescue quick enough though, leading them out the door. When they stopped at the hood of the car, waiting for Mike, their hands were interlocked. Neither one of them made a movement to change that, a small smile matching smile on both their faces.

"You two aren't being gross out here, are you?" Mike called, walking out a minute later.

Nancy shook her head, rolling her eyes. "Says the eighth grader that just spent fifteen minutes saying goodbye to his long lost girlfriend?"

"Shut up! She's not my girlfriend, I mean, she just got back."

She ruffled her little brother's hair instead of replying, causing him to swat at her hand, before climbing into the passenger side.

Jonathan started up the engine, taking only a few minutes to drive them home. The whole ride was pretty quiet, not without some small talk and bickering between siblings. Not that any of them knew what to really say to each other after what they'd all gone through in the past two days.

"Night Jonathan," Mike said as he got out of the car that was stalling in their driveway. "Tell Will to call when I can come over, I don't even need a ride. I'll bike with Lucas."

"Okay, I will." Jonathan nodded as Mike closed the door, waving goodbye.

Nancy, however, was thumbing her scar, as if she was thinking. She looked like she wanted to say something, but decided better of it. "My, uh, bag's in the trunk."

"Right, right." He nodded, popping the trunk as he got out, going to get it for her.

She mumbled a thank you, trying to ignore the butterflies in her stomach and warmth she felt where their fingers brushed as she

grabbed it. Jonathan felt the same, unsure but also completely certain as to why he felt so nervous when Nancy was around. He was trying to remind himself of last night, what she said, but these past few days felt so surreal. Here, in front of her house, it felt real. She was shifting the weight on her feet.

“See you at school?” She tried to lighten the mood, weakly.

“Yeah, right. I might have to miss a few more classes.” He said just as soft as she did.

Nancy nodded. “Can I still see you, though?”

His mouth went dry. “Yeah.” Of course. He nodded repeatedly. He didn’t even want to leave her tonight. “I’ll, uh, come and pick Mike up tomorrow?”

Nancy smiled now. “That’d be nice of you.” She looked him in the eyes again, confident as always. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Before either one of them could think, Nancy was pushing herself up, pressing their lips gently together. It was softer than every other time they’ve kissed since then, but it meant just as much. They were both very aware of the fact they shouldn’t be making out in front of her house. After what felt like the longest and shortest amount of time in Jonathan’s life, they detached themselves, Nancy’s hands on his coat collar. When she pulled away she was smiling, he was too.

“Goodnight Jonathan.”

“Goodnight.” He wanted to say more, but he wasn’t sure what. ‘Goodnight Nancy, I think I’m in love with you?’ Way too soon. “Hey, uh, Nancy?” He called after her, causing her to turn.

She nodded, waiting for him to elaborate. “You, you don’t have to wait a month this time.” He said, feeling a little bit braver than he had ever before.

Jonathan wouldn’t trade anything for the smile that lit up on Nancy’s face. For a half a second in her head, she debated running up and

kissing him again. But she shook her head, that'd probably be too much, wouldn't it? "Good. Also, thanks. For giving me something to wait for." She looked him in the eyes one last time, before walking up her driveway.

Jonathan was left grinning too, as he got into his car. "Goodnight Nancy, I think I'm in love with you" would be perfect for another night, he was sure of it, just not tonight.